6 international airports namely Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Cochin with effect from 1.4.2008. Under APIS all international airlines flying into India, are required to provide passenger particulars electronically in the prescribed format within fifteen minutes of their take off from the origin airport outside India, to the immigration authorities at the six designated airports. All the 76 international airlines operating at the six designated destination airports in the country have become APIS complaint. APIS has effectively reduced immigration clearance time and enhanced the security screening of passengers.

Cases of luggage theft at Delhi airport

130. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE:
SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of cases of theft of luggage of travellers and involvement of unscrupulous staff members of airlines or ground handling agencies at Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi (IGIA) came to the notice of Government;

(b) if so, the details of such cases reported during the last three months;

(c) whether Government has taken any concrete steps to check such theft cases at various airports; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) 7 cases of luggage theft have been registered during last three months.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Instructions have been issued to all concerned that all personnel working with Ground Handling Agents shall be searched by airport security personnel at the Gates while leaving airport. Also surveillance is kept by CISF manually and through CCTV cameras at all major airports. Installation of CCTV is under process at other airports. Airlines and different agencies operating at Airports have been briefed to get police verification report of their employees. However, private scheduled airlines have taken following steps to curb the baggage theft cases:

* All loaders are frisked thoroughly before and after the loading.
* Enhanced vigilance at airports.
* Loading/unloading of checked-in baggage under supervision of security/Airports services staff.
* Automated Baggage Reconciliation System at metro airports to reduce instances of such mishandlings.
* Extensive training imparted to ramp staff (especially loaders) on baggage handling.
* Establishment of dedicated baggage handling units at Metro Airports.
* Tally sheet implemented for each flight by some airlines which is handled by well trained staff.

In case of lost baggages, scheduled domestic airlines also provide compensation to passengers as per company policy.

Slashing of air-fares

131. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India and Indian Airlines have lately slashed air-fares and freights following fall in prices of Aviation fuel; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Consequent to the reduction in fuel prices, NACIL has reduced fares on all major sectors ("X" Class) on the network effective 29.12.2008. With this reduction, fares in lower Instant Purchase (XFS) class have become cheaper by approx. 10% on the network.

Further, fuel surcharge which was levied to partly compensate the rising fuel expenses, has been reduced by Rs.400/- per coupon for all domestic sectors effective 01.12.2008. The current fuel surcharge collected from the passengers is Rs.1,950/- per coupon for distance upto 750 kms. and Rs.2,700/- for sectors with distances more than 750 Kms.

As regards air freight charges, the international air freight rate is a composite rate comprising of three components *viz.* (a) Basic airfreight rate; (b) Fuel Surcharge; (c) Security Surcharge.

While there has been no reduction in Basic airfreight rate and Security Surcharge, both on domestic and international sectors, the Fuel Surcharge was reduced by approx. 21% in February, 2009, except on perishable goods as the fuel surcharge on such goods is significantly lower than the general cargo.

Membership fees of employee unions

132. SHRI BHARATKUMAR RAUT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that employees of erstwhile Air India and Indian Airlines have been demanding not to deduct money from their salary as membership fees for the union of which they are not members; and

(b) if so, by when the National Aviation Corporation of India Limited (NACIL) would stop these deductions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. Some of the employees in erstwhile Air India have requested the Management not to deduct the subscription fees to be paid to Aviation Industry Employees' Guild from their salary.

(b) The deductions have not been stopped as the genuineness of the requests of the employees have been questioned by the concerned Union and the status-quo would be maintained till a final verification/decision is taken in the matter.